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Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

Minutes of the 8th meeting
held in Conference Room 1 of Legislative Council Complex
on Wednesday, 23 June 2021 at 9:00 am

Members present:

Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS (Deputy Chairman)
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

Members attending:

Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

Member absent:

Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP

Public Officers attending:

Mr Raistlin LAU Chun, JP Deputy Secretary for Financial Services
and the Treasury (Treasury) 1

Mrs Angelina CHEUNG FUNG Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1
Wing-ping, JP

Dr Raymond SO Wai-man, BBS, Under Secretary for Transport and
JP Housing

Mr Stephen WONG Wing-hung Project Director (2)
Transport and Housing Bureau

Ms Linda CHOY Wai-kwen Chief Executive Officer (Transitional
Housing)
Transport and Housing Bureau

Mr Jacky WU Kwok-yuen, JP Head of Civil Engineering Office
Civil Engineering and Development
Department

Mr Joseph LO Kwok-kuen Deputy Head of Civil Engineering Office
(Housing)
Civil Engineering and Development
Department

Mr Harry MA Hon-ngai Assistant Director of Civil Engineering
and Development (Administration)
Civil Engineering and Development
Department

Mr Michael HONG Wing-kit Chief Civil Engineer (Public Works
Programme)
Transport and Housing Bureau

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Connie SZETO Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance:

Mr Patrick CHOI	Council Secretary (1)4
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Ms Sharon CHAN	Legislative Assistant (1)4
Ms Haley CHEUNG	Legislative Assistant (1)10

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The Chairman drew members' attention to the information paper ECI(2021-22)6, which set out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002 and the changes to the directorate establishment in relation to the four items on the agenda. She then reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP"), they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interest relating to the item under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the item. She also drew members' attention to RoP 84 on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

EC(2021-22)2 Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Housing Department with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee up to 31 March 2025 to oversee the operation of the Task Force on Transitional Housing

2. The Chairman remarked that the establishment proposal was to create one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Housing Department, to be designated as Deputy Head of the Task Force on Transitional Housing ("TFTH"), with immediate effect upon approval by the Finance Committee ("FC") up to 31 March 2025 to oversee the operation of TFTH.

3. The Chairman pointed out that the Panel on Housing had discussed the proposal at its meeting on 1 March 2021 and supported the Administration's submission of the proposal to the Establishment Committee ("ESC") for consideration. Members were generally concerned about how the proposal would speed up the development of transitional housing, enhance the effectiveness of relevant work, promote co-operation among government departments, improve communication and liaison with local communities, and disseminate information on transitional housing projects in a more transparent and complete manner. Furthermore, considering the prevailing fiscal constraints, some members

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asked if existing staff could be deployed to perform the duties of the proposed post. Supplementary information was provided after the meeting to address members' concerns, and the relevant paper (CB(1)968/20-21(01)) was circulated to members of the Panel on 31 May 2021.

Deliberations

Progress and targets of providing transitional housing units

4. Mr POON Siu-ping expressed support for this establishment proposal. He noted that the Government had set a target of providing 15 000 transitional housing units by 2022-2023. According to Enclosure I to the discussion paper EC(2021-22)2, as at May 2021, there were about 7 000 units with known estimated completion dates. He asked if the current progress of transitional housing supply met the Government's expectation, and whether FC's refusal to create the same supernumerary post in July 2020 had affected the progress of implementing transitional housing schemes.

5. Mr Tony TSE supported the Administration's provision of transitional housing to alleviate the housing shortage in Hong Kong. He asked the Administration to clarify whether the Government's target of "providing 15 000 units" referred to "having 15 000 units completed and ready for occupation". He also asked if the Government would be able to meet the target as scheduled; if not, whether the Administration would formulate another target indicating the estimated number of units to be completed and ready for occupation by 2022-2023.

6. Mr Vincent CHENG expressed support for this establishment proposal in principle, and urged the Administration to make further efforts in identifying land so as to raise the supply target of transitional housing units. Furthermore, he held that the Administration should avoid elevating the regulatory requirements for transitional housing so as to help the operating organizations meet the supply targets as soon as possible and lower the unit construction cost.

7. Regarding the latest progress of transitional housing projects, the Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") indicated that the Government had identified land for the provision of 15 000 transitional housing units. Among them, more than 1 300 units had been completed, about 4 100 units were under construction with some scheduled for completion in 2021; for about 9 100 units, various pre-construction work had started; and a potential of 520 units were under in-depth feasibility study. He added that the number of transitional housing units to be

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"provided", to which the Administration referred, included all the units in the aforementioned stages, from those under study to those completed. If the progress of individual projects was thwarted by any uncertainties arising during the construction period, TFTH would resolve the problems expeditiously with a view to minimizing their impact as far as possible.

8. USTH stressed that the Administration was determined to continue identifying more suitable land for constructing more transitional housing and would take forward various transitional housing projects expeditiously on the land identified to relieve people's hardship. Despite FC's rejection of the proposal to create the same supernumerary post in July 2020, given the expected surge in TFTH's workload for the next few years, the Administration saw an imminent need for creating the proposed post to strengthen the directorate support in TFTH to steer the efficient implementation of transitional housing projects within the tight schedule with a view to expediting the supply of units.

9. With regard to the concerns about the regulation and construction cost of transitional housing, USTH replied that TFTH had been striving to resolve the policy issues with relevant bureaux/departments ("B/Ds"), and it was within the Administration's overall policy direction to shorten the construction period of transitional housing and lower its construction cost as far as possible. However, amid the rising international prices on raw materials, the Administration was exercising robust monitoring of cost changes to seek ways to lower the cost on various fronts.

10. Regarding the estimated completion dates of transitional housing projects, USTH pointed out that relevant information of some projects was set out in Enclosure 1 to the discussion paper EC(2021-22)2. At the request of the Chairman and Mr Tony TSE, the Administration would provide supplementary information indicating the estimated number of units to be completed each year with respect to the supply target of transitional housing units.

(Post meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. ESC76/20-21(01) on 6 July 2021.)

Work of the proposed post and candidate for the post

11. Mr Christopher CHEUNG asked why the Administration had to create the post of Deputy Head of TFTH, given that TFTH had already identified land for the provision of 15 000 transitional housing units. He held that the Administration should provide further data to illustrate how the creation of the Deputy Head post would help expedite the

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implementation of transitional housing schemes.

12. Mr YIU Si-wing and Mr Christopher CHEUNG enquired about the specific jobs of the Deputy Head of TFTH between March 2023 and March 2025 (i.e. between the expected time by which the current transitional housing supply target was met and the expiry of the supernumerary post). Mr YIU Si-wing considered that after meeting the current transitional housing supply target, the Deputy Head of TFTH should help the Administration raise the supply target further.

13. Citing the Lok Sin Tong-run transitional social housing scheme "LST Housing" (i.e. the modular housing project located at the junction of Sung Wong Toi Road and To Kwa Wan Road) as an example, USTH illustrated the importance of creating the Deputy Head of TFTH post for speeding up the implementation of transitional housing projects. He pointed out that the project, which provided 110 transitional housing units, took 250 days to complete. If high construction efficiency was to be maintained for large-scale transitional housing projects in the future, the steering work provided by the Deputy Head of TFTH would be indispensable.

14. Regarding the supply target of transitional housing units, USTH stressed that the Administration would continue to explore measures to raise the target, with a view to breaking through the established supply target whenever practicable. Furthermore, as the Deputy Head of TFTH would also keep monitoring the operation of the approved transitional housing projects, the post would still have a lot of work to follow up with even after the current supply target was met in 2023 as expected.

15. Mr Tony TSE pointed out that taking forward transitional housing projects involved professional expertise-related procedures, such as vetting and approving project proposals and identifying suitable land, etc. The procedures concerned were also crucial to whether project implementation could be sped up. He enquired why the Administration proposed to create an administrative officer ("AO") grade post instead of a professional one. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok echoed that the Administration should keep an open mind about whether the deputy Head of TFTH post would be filled by an AO or professional grade officer.

16. USTH advised that holder of the proposed post would be responsible for steering the work of TFTH, which was made up of multi-disciplinary professionals, including supporting the Assessment Committee in vetting applications for the Funding Scheme, monitoring the implementation of various projects, facilitating the interaction and collaboration between TFTH and parties within and outside the

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Government, and overseeing the review of the transitional housing policy as and when necessary. Given the broad and extensive range of responsibilities involved, the Administration suggested that the post be taken up by an AO grade officer. Professional staff in TPTH would provide assistance and expertise for the Deputy Head of TPTH to take forward various tasks.

17. Mr POON Siu-ping noted that the Deputy Head of TPTH would be supported by 26 existing time-limited non-directorate post holders. He asked about the expiry of these posts, and whether the supporting manpower concerned was sufficient for tackling the workload of providing 15 000 transitional housing units.

18. The Chairman and Mr YIU Si-wing asked whether the Administration had any plans to increase the manpower of the support team, including the posts of AO or personal secretary.

19. USTH replied that despite TPTH's increasingly heavy workload and tight manpower situation, the 26-strong support team would continue to endeavour to provide services with the use of existing resources. The Administration would arrange matters relating to TPTH's organization structure according to Enclosure 3 to the discussion paper EC(2021-22)2, including arranging a Personal Secretary I for the Deputy Head of TPTH, but there was no plan to create additional AO posts in TPTH.

20. Mr Tony TSE asked about the differences in roles and responsibilities between the 15 professional staff in the support team and the consultants engaged by the non-government organizations ("NGOs") taking forward transitional housing projects.

21. USTH explained that NGOs might not be able to seek professional advice through engaging consultants before their applications for transitional housing projects were approved. Under such circumstances, professional staff in the support team of TPTH could provide them with preliminary advice regarding the feasibility of the projects and other related matters according to actual needs.

Sites and premises for transitional housing development

22. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned about the progress of the Administration's pilot scheme to subsidize the provision of transitional housing through NGOs using rooms in hotels and guesthouses.

23. Mr YIU Si-wing noted that since the commencement of the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation (Amendment) Ordinance 2020, the

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guesthouse licences issued by the Administration were very often valid for only 12 months. Therefore, operators might find it difficult to meet the requirement that the tenancy period of transitional housing under the pilot scheme should not be shorter than two years. Mr YIU was concerned about how the Administration would help the hotel and guesthouse sector resolve the above problem and how it would encourage NGOs to participate in the pilot scheme more proactively.

24. Mr Holden CHOW held that making use of hotel and guesthouse rooms as transitional housing could not only increase the supply of units within a short period but might also incur a lower cost. He asked the Administration whether it would consider taking forward more transitional housing projects of this type.

25. USTH replied that with regard to the pilot scheme mentioned by Mr POON, the Administration had currently identified 240 hotel or guesthouse rooms for the relevant use. After the pilot scheme had been approved by the Commission on Poverty for implementation in February 2021, the Administration briefed the sector on the scheme and began accepting applications in March and April respectively. Vetting and approval for the first batch of projects had completed in June 2021, and units would be ready for occupation from July 2021 onwards.

26. USTH said that he understood the various views held by the sector about the pilot scheme and its need to consider a number of related factors before deciding whether to participate in the scheme. After gaining more experience, TPTH would liaise more proactively with the hotel and guesthouse sector and NGOs and facilitate the reaching of consensus between the two over the participation in the scheme as far as possible. With regard to the operation period, he added that the Administration would adopt a pragmatic approach in facilitating the discussion between NGOs and all stakeholders (such as relevant B/Ds), with a view to resolving policy matters and handling problems on both technical and practical aspects. The work of the Deputy Head of TPTH would include overseeing the pilot scheme and suggesting relevant measures for improvement and adjustment when necessary to enable effective implementation of the scheme.

27. Regarding the concern on cost, USTH pointed out that while using hotel and guesthouse rooms as transitional housing could increase supply quickly, government subsidy was mainly spent on subsidizing the operating expenditure of NGOs and paying rents to hotels or guesthouses. In contrast, if the relevant resources were spent on transitional housing unit development, transitional housing projects of longer operation periods might be provided, thus benefiting more residents in the long run.

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28. Mr Holden CHOW was concerned about whether the Deputy Head of TFTH would have enough authority to discuss transitional housing matters with other bureaux and even steer other government departments in implementing the work concerned. Citing the many sites of vacant school premises in the New Territories as an example, he pointed out that they could be put to better use through conversion into transitional housing. He urged TFTH to strengthen relevant work through maintaining close communication with the Development Bureau.

29. In response, USTH advised that the Deputy Head of TFTH played a key role in co-ordinating with other related B/Ds and in assisting NGOs in their discussions with various stakeholders (such as B/Ds and developers) in working out the framework of various projects. Indeed, among the current transitional housing projects facilitated by TFTH, there were many instances of using sites of vacant school premises. TFTH would support NGOs in taking forward and completing relevant projects as soon as practicable.

30. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support for this establishment proposal. He noted that among those commenced transitional housing projects as set out in Enclosure 1 to the discussion paper EC(2021-22)2, the Tsat Sing Kong, Pat Heung and Kam Tin, Yuen Long project, which was situated on government land, was expected to provide about 900 units. He asked if the Administration would consider rezoning the aforementioned site for long-term housing development or resuming some of the private land intended for the development of large-scale transitional housing projects as set out in Enclosure 1, so as to increase long-term housing supply.

31. USTH explained that the Tsat Sing Kong project was located atop a tunnel section of the Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL"). The construction of permanent housing on that location might affect the operation of XRL and hence the relevant site was only suitable for short-term uses such as transitional housing which would not affect the running of XRL.

32. USTH added that the Administration would do planning for the most suitable use for each piece of land taking into account its unique conditions. If an individual piece of land intended for the development of transitional housing was found to be better suited for long-term housing development, the Administration would consider changing the relevant land use. However, as most of the potential sites for transitional housing projects had their long-term planned uses, the land concerned could only be used for the provision of transitional housing in the short term. The

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Administration would strive to extend the usable lives of these sites (including those on private land) for the provision of more transitional housing units to meet public demand. At the request of Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, the Administration would provide supplementary information after the meeting on the anticipated operation periods for the transitional housing projects in progress as set out in Enclosure 1 to the aforementioned paper.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members on 6 July 2021 vide LC Paper No. ESC76/20-21(01).)

Online information platform on transitional housing

33. Mr Vincent CHENG hoped that the Administration would properly monitor the operation of the online information platform on transitional housing so as to ensure optimal turnover of transitional housing units to benefit more residents.

34. On the latest development of the online information platform, USTH pointed out that the Administration was soliciting views on the establishment of a subdivided unit ("SDU") rental information platform as recommended in the Report of the Task Force for the Study on Tenancy Control of Subdivided Units. The Administration would also seek views and conduct studies on how to implement the other recommendations set out in the report, and planned to invite NGOs to set up information platforms with government funding, so as to facilitate public access to information on the SDU rental market. On the other hand, the Administration had updated the contents of the thematic webpage on TFTH for a number of times recently to provide more timely and detailed information on existing transitional housing projects as well as projects operated by various NGOs which were available for application. The thematic webpage also provided links to the websites of different operating organizations to facilitate browsing of the details of the transitional housing projects under various NGOs. The Administration agreed that the transparency of information platforms should be enhanced to facilitate the search for relevant information, speed up the turnover of transitional housing units and monitor the progress of transitional housing projects.

35. The Chairman pointed out that the SDU rental information platform would be operated by NGOs, and the majority of the information on the thematic webpage on TFTH was also provided by NGOs. As the Government could obtain relevant information from the district offices of government departments such as the Housing Department, the Social Welfare Department and the Home Affairs Department, she asked why it

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still had to rely on NGOs for operating the information platform. She was concerned whether the running of transitional housing in the future would be dominated by NGOs with a closer relationship with the Government, and urged the Administration to consider allowing more community organizations to participate in the provision of relevant information and services.

36. USTH explained that neither transitional housing projects nor the SDU rental information platform would be dominated by individual NGOs. The Administration's current idea was that individual NGOs with more operational experience would be responsible for consolidating and handling the information currently scattered on different NGO platforms for the provision of a one-stop SDU rental information platform. The Administration would resort to fair, impartial, and open procedures, such as tender, to ensure that all NGOs interested in running the SDU rental information platform could participate. USTH added that comparing with government departments, NGOs were more familiar with the needs of the beneficiaries of transitional housing at the district level, and they also had the relevant experience and service networks to provide these people with more appropriate support.

Occupation arrangements for transitional housing projects

37. The Chairman pointed out that the operation periods of transitional housing (such as the "Nam Cheong 220" transitional housing project) were in general with short duration, and expressed concern about the rehousing arrangements for residents who had to move out upon expiry of the projects. She also asked whether the Administration would request NGOs to focus on arranging people who had been awaiting the allocation of public rental housing ("PRH") units for a prolonged period or those who would soon be allocated PRH units to move to transitional housing first, so as to save the work of rehousing residents who moved out from transitional housing.

38. USTH advised that residents who had to move out upon expiry of transitional housing projects might, apart from moving to PRH units, be referred to other transitional housing units. NGOs would provide the necessary support during the process, and the actual scenario would depend on the arrangement made by the NGO responsible for operating the project. As for the units vacated by outgoing residents, they would usually be arranged to be occupied by the next persons waiting in line. Regarding the "Nam Cheong 220" transitional housing project, the landowner initially only agreed to lend out the land for two years. However, as it took time for the project's advance works to complete, the land had so far been used for more than two years.

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39. Regarding the eligibility criteria for transitional housing, USTH advised that basically an applicant should have been waiting for PRH units for three years or above and was currently living in inadequate housing. However, the NGO responsible for operating the project could flexibly handle the eligibility criteria in accordance with its principles for 20% of the units in the project and allocate those units to applicants to whom priority should be accorded in the opinion of the NGO concerned.

Voting on the item

40. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. All the members present voted for the item. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval.

41. Mr Tony TSE requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting, but he would consider whether to withdraw the request for separate voting after examining the supplementary information provided by the Administration.

(Post-meeting note: Mr Tony TSE's decision to withdraw his request for separate voting was circulated to members on 6 July 2021 vide LC Paper No. ESC77/20-21(01).)

EC(2020-21)8 Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Chief Engineer (D1) in the Civil Engineering and Development Department with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee up to 31 March 2026 to cope with the workload arising from public housing developments

42. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create one supernumerary post of Chief Engineer ("CE") (D1) in the Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD"), designated as CE/Housing Projects 2 ("CE/HP2"), with immediate effect upon approval of FC up to 31 March 2026 to cope with the workload arising from public housing developments.

43. The Chairman pointed out that the Panel on Housing had discussed the proposal at its meeting on 29 March 2021 and members did not oppose the Administration's submission of the proposal to ESC for consideration. Members were mainly concerned about the Administration's submission of the proposal to re-create the post to the Panel just two days before expiry of

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the post, as well as the staffing arrangement to be made by the Administration before FC's approval of the proposal. Some members asked about the work completed and not yet completed by the proposed supernumerary post over the past five years, and justifications for re-creating the post concerned. Furthermore, given that a permanent post of CE/HP3 had been created in the Housing Branch of Civil Engineering Office ("CEO") in 2018, members were concerned whether there was any overlapping in the duties of some CE posts in CEDD. Some members asked about the relevant cost of the non-directorate posts supporting the proposed post. Supplementary information had been provided after the meeting in response to members' queries, and the relevant paper (CB(1)912/20-21(01)) was circulated to all Members on 14 May 2021.

Deliberations

Manpower required for public housing development

44. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok pointed out that public housing was one of the long-term demands of society and hence it was essential for the Administration to allocate sufficient manpower for implementing the relevant work. He supported the re-creation of the supernumerary post of CE/HP2.

45. Mr Tony TSE expressed support for expediting the provision of public housing units. He pointed out that apart from engineers, support from other staff of different grades was also required for public housing development. He asked why the CE/HP2 post was re-created on a supernumerary basis and whether it was necessary to increase the manpower of other professional grades to help the CE take forward the site formation and infrastructure works for public housing developments. He also asked whether the relevant duties could be absorbed by the existing directorate officers in CEDD if the supernumerary post would not be re-created.

46. The Chairman noted that according to the discussion paper, one of the main duties of CE/HP2 was to supervise the site formation and relevant infrastructure works of a number of public housing developments in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. She enquired if these works could be completed in five years; if so, whether the proposed post would lapse upon expiry in 2026.

47. Head of CEO, CEDD ("H/CEO") explained that when the Administration proposed to create one supernumerary CE post in CEO of CEDD in 2016, the main tasks of that post included leading departmental staff in conducting a feasibility study on 62 potential sites for public

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housing development. The Administration had pointed out in the discussion paper submitted to ESC then that the continued need of the above supernumerary post would be reviewed taking into account the implementation progress of the projects. When the creation of one permanent CE post in CEDD was approved in 2018, the number of potential sites for public housing development handled by CEDD had increased to 70, and had now further raised to around 90, involving about 300 000 public housing units. After reviewing its operational need, CEDD considered it necessary to re-create the supernumerary CE/HP2 post so as to maintain the support at the directorate level. The supplementary information regarding the work completed by the supernumerary post over the past five years and the work targets of the re-created post in the next five years, etc. had been submitted to the Panel on Housing for reference (see LC Paper No. CB(1)912/20-21(01)).

48. Regarding the responsibilities of CE/HP2, H/CEO pointed out that the officer would continue to provide dedicated leadership and high-level professional input throughout the different stages of each project for public housing development, and to ensure that, various constraints and complex issues, the planning, design, and construction aspects of the relevant site formation and infrastructure works for potential public housing development sites would be properly handled. It was noted in the discussion paper that the preliminary tasks mainly taken up by CE/HP2 included public housing development sites in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. If there were other sites for public housing development in the future, the officer might have to take up other projects as well. The Administration would review whether there was a need to retain the supernumerary CE post in 2025, taking into account the implementation progress of the relevant projects.

49. H/CEO advised that there were a total of two CE posts in the Housing Branch of CEO, including the supernumerary CE post proposed to be re-created. Current public housing development site projects under CEDD were mainly undertaken by these two posts on a full-time basis. Furthermore, the other four CEs in CEDD also took up public housing development site projects apart from their existing duties. After a prudent review of the existing manpower resources, CEDD considered that its other directorate officers (including the four CEs who were taking up public housing development site projects concurrently) could not further take up the duties of the proposed supernumerary CE post without affecting their current duties. As for the manpower arrangements of other departments responsible for public housing development projects, the relevant departments would conduct review regularly and make adjustment where necessary. USTH added that the relevant departments had no plans to increase their manpower at present.

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50. Responding to Mr Tony TSE's inquiry on the note to paragraph 15 of EC(2021-22)8, H/CEO explained that according to the paper, as at 1 May 2021, there were six unfilled directorate posts in CEDD. Creation of those posts, which would be responsible for taking forward the work related to sustainable Lantau development, had just been approved by FC on 30 April 2021. The posts would temporarily remain unfilled on that date.

Making good use of technology and reviewing workflow

51. Given the persistently heavy workload of various CEs in CEDD, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan was concerned whether the Administration had made good use of technologies and reviewed the workflow of housing development projects so as to help monitoring the progress of the projects and reducing the workload of works supervisors as well as expediting project implementation.

52. H/CEO replied that CEDD had applied technologies, such as building information modelling, for the conduct of works design and planning in a virtual environment, so as to speed up works progress and facilitate the Government's internal and external communication. As for project management, the Development Bureau had established the Steering Group on Streamlining Development Control to undertake a comprehensive review of the development approval processes of both government and private projects, and to rationalize the development-related requirements imposed by different bureaux. Apart from supporting the Steering Group to take forward the review on streamlining the relevant statutory procedures, CEDD had also introduced district term consultant contract for the feasibility study on the site formation and infrastructure works for housing development, in order to save the need of conducting the more time-consuming individual tender exercises for those studies.

Voting on the item

53. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. All the members present voted for the item. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval. No members requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

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54. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:26 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 July 2021